

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO HORN OF AFRICA COLLECTIVE

CONFIDENTIAL STATE 083020

FOL ADDIS ABABA 7472 SENT ACTION SECSTATE DJIBOUTI INFO
MOGADISCIO NAIROBI MAR 29, 1978 REPEATED TO YOU UUOTE

CONFIDENTIAL ADDIS ABABA 1472

DEPT PASS HORN OF AFRICA COLLECTIVE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR, DJ, ET, SO, US
SUBJ: FORMAL PROTEST TO MARCH 25 FOREIGN MINISTRY STATEMENT
ON DJIBOUTI DELIVERED

REF: STATE 080082

1. MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MOFA) AMERICAN AFFAIRS DEPT
HEAD BERHANE DRESSA RECEIVED ME AT 1400 GMT TODAY AND I DELIVERED
TO HIM VERBATIM TEXT OF REFTEL, PARA 2 BEGINNING "THE UNITED
STATES HAS TAKEN NOTE..." IN FORMHOF DIPLOMATIC NOTE. I EXPRESSED
MY REGRET TO BERHANE THAT ETHIOPIAN CHARGE IN WASHINGTON WAS QUITE
ILL THUS MAKING IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR DEPT TO DELIVER FORMAL PROTEST
EARLIER. (AS DEPT IS AWARE, WE HAD EARLIER REPORT THAT BERHANE
FELT LACK OF US PROTEST LENT CREDENCE TO ACCUSATION AND THERE-
FORE IT MAY HAVE BEEN HELPFUL TO DOCUMENT THAT USG TRIED EARLIER.)
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BERHANE SAID THAT THEIR CHARGE HAD REPORTED DEPT SPOKESMAN'S
MARCH 25 DENIAL OF ETHIOPIAN ACCUSATIONS AND THAT HE WAS
UNAWARE OF THEIR CHARGE'S ILLNESS, BUT WOULD INQUIRE.

2. BERHANE SAID THAT FORMAL DENIAL BY USG WAS QUITE WELCOME AND
"SOURCE OF COMFORT". HE SAID THAT IF ETHIOPIAN GOVT (EPMG) IS
WRONG, IT WILL BE HAPPY TO BE WRONG ON THIS MATTER, BUT THAT

EPMG FELT IT NECESSARY TO SPEAK OUT FORCEFULLY NOW TO PREVENT ANOTHER OGADEN-LIKE SITUATION FROM DEVELOPING IN DJIBOUTI. BERHANE SAID MOFA STATEMENT HAD BEEN BASED ON INFORMATION PROVIDED TO EPMG THAT US WAS ENCOURAGING SOMALI IRREDENTISM TOWARD DJIBOUTI. BERHANE ALSO OUTLINED EPMG'S POSITION TOWARD DJIBOUTI IN SOME DETAIL (BEING REPORTED SEPTEL) STATING THAT THERE LITTLE OR NOR DIFFERENCE IN EPMG VIEW OF SOMALI INTENTIONS TOWARD OGADEN AND DJIBOUTI AND THAT "EPMG WOULD NOT REMAIN IDLE" ABOUT SOMALI EFFORTS TO SUBVERT PRESENT GOVT. DURING MOST PLEASANT CONVERSATION WITH BERHANE IN RECENT MONTHS, I WAS, NEVERTHELESS, ABLE REITERATE FUTILITY OF FALSE ACCUSATIONS.

3. IN SUM, BERHANE SEEMED QUITE GLAD TO RECEIVE FORMAL PROTEST AND SAID HE WOULD BRING IT TO ATTENTION OF HIS MINISTER "AS SOON AS POSSIBLE". IF BERHANE'S ATTITUDE IS ANY INDICATION, AND I BELIEVE IT IS, PROTEST MAY HELP REINFORCE POSITION OF SOME MODERATES WITHIN MOFA AND POSSIBLY ELSEWHERE IN GOVT. EMBASSY WOULD LIKE TO RECALL BERHANE'S REACTIONS NOT NECESSARILY IDENTICAL TO OFFICIAL EPMG POSITION AND WOULD CAUTION AGAINST REPORTING HIS REACTIONS TO PRESS. MATHERON UNQUOTE COOPER

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